BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5575 MARCH 3, 1978
CLAUDIO ESKENAZI

THIS WEEK NO. 9

ANNCR:

"THIS WEEK."

FROM THE VOICE OF AMERICA, THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK GONE BY...A LOOK AT SOME OF THE EVENTS, A CROSS-SECTION OF THE IDEAS, AND THE VOICES OF SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO MADE NEWS DURING THE PAST SEVEN DAYS. YOUR NARRATOR IS----------.

NARR:

WHILE MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA WAS RELATIVELY SUBDUED THIS WEEK THERE WAS A VISIBLE ESCALATION IN THE WAR OF WORDS BETWEEN THE DISPUTING PARTIES AND INCREASING CONCERN IN WASHINGTON. IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE THIS WEEK, PRESIDENT CARTER SAID IT IS NOT U.S. POLICY TO LINK SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA TO THE STRATEGIC ARMS TALKS. BUT HE ADDED THAT ANY SALT AGREEMENT WILL HAVE TO BE RATIFIED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS, AND CONGRESS IS CERTAIN TO BE INFLUENCED BY THE VIEWS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

MISTER CARTER ALSO STRONGLY ATTACKED THE SOVIET UNION -- DESCRIBING ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE HORN AS A THREAT TO PEACE. HE SAID MOSCOW FIRST ARMED SOMALIA TO THE TEETH, AND THEN WHEN SOMALIA INVADED THE OGADEN, MOSCOW OVER-ARMED AND HELPED TO DIRECT ETHIOPIAN FORCES. MISTER CARTER ALSO SAID THE UNITED STATES HAS DECIDED NOT TO AID SOMALIA WITH ARMS SHIPMENTS BECAUSE SOMALIA IS THE INVADING NATION AND BECAUSE BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND ETHIOPIA HAVE ASSURED THE UNITED STATES THERE WILL BE NO INVASION OF SOMALIA. MISTER CARTER POINTED OUT THAT U.S. POLICY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA IS BASED ON THREE PRINCIPLES:

TAPE: `CUT ONE -- CARTER

"ONE IS A SOMALI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TERRITORIES WHICH THEY OCCUPY IN EASTERN ETHIOPIA IN THE OGADEN AREA. SECONDLY, A REMOVAL FROM ETHIOPIA OF CUBAN AND SOVIET TROOPS. THIRD, A LESSENING OF THE TENSIONS THAT EXIST BETWEEN THOSE COUNTRIES AND AN HONORING OF THE SOMETIMES ARBITRARILY DRAWN INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES IN AFRICA. AND WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE O.A.U. -- THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY -- WOULD BECOME MORE SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THIS DISPUTE IN A PEACEFUL WAY."

NARR:

EARLIER IN THE WEEK PRESIDENT CARTER'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI SAID THAT PROSPECTS FOR A NEW SALT AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION COULD BE DAMAGED BY WHAT HE CALLED THE UNWARRANTED INTRUSION OF SOVIET POWER IN AFRICA. HE ADDED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT TRYING TO LINK SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA TO THE SALT TALKS, BUT MISTER BRZEZINSKI INSISTED THE ONLY REALISTIC JUDGMENT IS TO CONCLUDE THAT SOVIET INVOLVEMENT INEVITABLY WILL COMPLICATE BOTH THE NEGOTIATION OF A SALT ACCORD AND ITS SENATE RATIFICATION.

LATER IN THE WEEK, THE SOVIET UNION DIRECTLY ACCUSED MISTER BRZEZINSKI OF ISSUING WHAT IT CALLED 'FRIGHTENING AND FANTASTIC' DATA ABOUT COMMUNIST AID TO ETHIOPIA. VOA'S MARK HOPKINS HAS MORE DETAILS:

TAPE: CUT TWO -- HOPKINS

"THE SOVIET UNION HAS OBJECTED TO AMERICAN SUGGESTIONS LINKING STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TALKS TO SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN WAR. THE COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER PRAVDA SAID LINKING OF NUCLEAR ARMS TALKS AND THE WAR IN THE HORN OF AFRICA "SMACKS OF GROSS BLACKMAIL." THE AUTHORITATIVE PARTY VOICE, IN A SIGNED COMMENTARY, SAID THE LINKAGE IS A DANGEROUS GAME THAT PREVIOUS AMERICAN POLITICAL LEADERSHIPS HAD USED WITH, PRAVDA SAID, SAD RESULTS."

NARR:

(OPT) MEANWHILE, THE SOMALI INFORMATION MINISTER CHARGED THIS WEEK THAT FOUR EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAVE JOINED THE SOVIET UNION IN ASSISTING ETHIOPIA. THE SOMALI OFFICIAL SAID THE EAST GERMANS ARE IN CHARGE OF ETHIOPIAN MILITARY

COMMUNICATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE, THAT BULGARIA IS PROVIDING FOOD, WHILE HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA ARE SUPPLYINGEITHER ARMS OR LOGISTICAL SUPPLIES. HE ADDED THAT ALL THESE COUNTRIES ARE ALSO PROVIDING MILITARY ADVISORS TO ETHIOPIAN FORCES. (END OPT)

IN ADDIS ABABA LATER IN THE WEEK --WHERE SOVIET INFLUENCE HAS GROWN CONSIDERABLY SINCE THE MARXIST COUP OF 1974 --ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS PUBLICLY ADMITTED FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT CUBAN SOLDIERS WERE INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING IN THE OGADEN.

TENSIONS WERE ALSO RUNNING HIGH IN ANOTHER PART OF AFRICA -- EGYPT-- IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE LARNACA AIRPORT GUN BATTLE BETWEEN CYPRIOT TROOPS AND EGYPTIAN COMMANDOS. THIS WEEK EGYPTIAN PREMIER MAMDUH SALIM ANNOUNCED GOVERNMENT PLANS TO REVOKE SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FOR THE COUNTRY'S PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY.

MISTER SALIM SAID THE GOVERNMENT WILL SUBMIT A DRAFT LAW DESIGNED TO PUT PALESTINIANS IN EGYPT ON AN EQUAL FOOTING WITH CITIZENS OF OTHER ARAB STATES RESIDENT IN EGYPT. HE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WILL REVIEW THE LINK BETWEEN PRIVILEGES ACCORDED PALESTINIANS IN EGYPT AND THE RIGHTS OF EGYPTIAN CITIZENS.

THERE ARE REPORTEDLY BETWEEN 25 AND 30 THOUSAND PALESTINIANS NOW LIVING IN EGYPT, AND MANY OF THEM HAVE BEEN THERE SINCE THE CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST ARAB-ISRAELI WAR IN 1948. UNTIL NOW THEY HAVE ENJOYED A SPECIAL STATUS WITH PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL RIGHTS SIMILAR TO THOSE ACCORDED EGYPTIAN NATIONALS. MEANWHILE EGYPT'S PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY IS INVESTIGATING THE MURDER IN CYPRUS OF THE PROMINENT EGYPTIAN JOURNALIST YOUSEF SEBAI BY TWO PALESTINIAN COMMANDOS.

(OPT) EFFORTS SEEKING A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONTINUED THIS WEEK UNDER THE MEDIATING ROLE OF U.S. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE ALFRED ATHERTON. VOA CORRESPONDENT DOUGLAS ROBERTS REPORTS FROM CAIRO:

TAPE: CUT THREE -- ROBERTS

"U.S. ASSISTANCE SECRETARY OF STATE ALFRED ATHERTON MET WITH EGYPT'S PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT WEDNESDAY AND THEN FLEW BACK TO ISRAEL -- AS HE CONTINUES HIS SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY AIMED AT AN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT ON A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES FOR A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT. MISTER ATHERTON SAID PRESIDENT SADAT IS AS DEDICATED AS EVER TO THE PEACE PROCESS AND HE DECLARED THAT ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES SHARE THAT DEDICATION. PREDICTABLY, THE AMERICAN ENVOY DECLINED TO GIVE ANY DETAILS OF THE TALKS. HE HAS SAID REPEATEDLY THAT IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR HIM TO ASSESS THE PROGRESS OR LACK OF IT AFTER EACH ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS. BUT HE DESCRIBED THE TALKS BOTH HERE AND IN ISRAEL AS DETAILED AND INTENSE. THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS IS CONTINUING, HE SAID, AND IN NO SENSE, CAN IT BE DESCRIBED AS STALLED. (EGYPTIAN) FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL AGREED TELLING REPORTERS IN ISMAILIA THAT MISTER ATHERTON'S MISSION IS EVIDENCE ENOUGH THAT THE PROCESS IS MOVING FORWARD." (END OPT)

NARR:

MEANWHILE IN TRIPOLI THIS WEEK, THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY WOUND UP AND EIGHT-DAY MEETING WITH CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S MIDDLE EAST PEACE INITIATIVE. THE O.A.U. MINISTERS DECLARED THAT NO STATE IS ENTITLED TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE P.L.O.

WITHOUT NAMING EGYPT, THE RESOLUTION WAS CLEARLY DIRECTED AT PRESIDENT SADAT'S RECENT PEACE MOVES. THE O.A.U. RESOLUTION ALSO SAID THAT DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL COULD NOT SERVE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR WHAT IT CALLED THE LEGITIMATE ARMED STRUGGLE BEING WAGED BY THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE IN PALESTINE.

THE O.A.U. MEETING IN TRIPOLI WAS ALSO HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE INTERNAL TALKS BEING HELD IN RHODESIA LATER IN THE WEEK. BUT THIS DID NOT DETER PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH AND THREE MODERATE BLACK LEADERS FROM SIGNING AN INTERNAL AGREEMENT

LEADING TO BLACK MAJORITY RULE. THE AGREEMENT WILL PAVE THE WAY FOR THE END OF WHITE MINORITY RULE IN THE SECESSIONIST BRITISH COLONY BY DECEMBER 31 OF THIS YEAR.

THE INTERNAL AGREEMENT APPARENTLY MEANS THAT PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH WILL STEP DOWN FROM EXECUTIVE POWER. UNDER TERMS OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT COMPROMISE, MISTER SMITH AND THE THREE INTERNALLY BASED BLACK LEADERS WILL ROTATE THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF A FOUR-MEMBER COUNCIL OF STATE. A LOWER LEVEL COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WILL HAVE EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF BLACKS AND WHITES DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD AND WILL SUPERVISE THE DAY-TO-DAY FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT.

(OPT) NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN INTERNAL SOLUTION IN RHODESIA HAD BEEN UNDERWAY IN SALISBURY FOR THREE MONTHS. A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WAS REACHED THREE WEEKS AGO ON THE FORM OF A NEWLY ELECTED PARLIAMENT WITH INHERENT GUARANTEES FOR THE WHITE MINORITY. THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DRAWING UP A NEW CONSTITUTION, REGISTERING NEARLY THREE MILLION NEW BLACK VOTERS AND CONDUCTING ELECTIONS ON THE BASIS OF ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE. (END OPT) THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT ALSO WILL HAVE TO SEEK INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE INTERNAL SOLUTION WHICH EXCLUDES THE PATRIOTIC FRONT OF JOSHUA NKOMO AND ROBERT MUGABE -- WHO HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING A FIVE-YEAR WAR TO UNSEAT THE WHITE MINORITY GOVERNMENT OF IAN SMITH.

IN THE INTERNATIONAL MONEY MARKET THIS WEEK, THE U.S. DOLLAR CONTINUED TO FALL, DROPPING BELOW TWO GERMAN MARKS -- AN HISTORIC LOW. THE DOLLAR'S SLIDE IS BEING ATTRIBUTED TO PESSIMISTIC FORECASTS FOR THE AMERICAN ECONOMY AND DEPRESSED SHARE PRICES ON WALL STREET.

THE U.S. DOLLAR ALSO CONTINUED ITS SLIDE AGAINST THE SWISS FRANC DESPITE THE LATEST STEPS BY SWISS FINANCIAL AUTHORITIES

TO CHECK THE INFLUX OF FOREIGN FUNDS. BANKERS SAID THE DOLLAR'S FALL HAD BEEN A CUMULATIVE PROCESS, CARRYING IT BELOW ITS TRUE ECONOMIC VALUE. BUT MONEY DEALERS ALSO SAID THE DOLLAR NEEDS MORE CONVINCING BACKING FROM U.S. FINANCIAL AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS AN ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAM TO HELP CUT THE HUGE U.S. TRADE DEFICIT.

IN WASHINGTON, THE DOLLAR'S WEAK SHOWING ON WORLD CURRENCY MARKETS PROMPTED EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FROM THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. TREASURY SECRETARY MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL SAID THAT WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE DOLLAR'S DECLINE, IT IS ALSO CONFIDENT THAT THE BASIC STRENGTH OF THE CURRENCY WILL REASSERT ITSELF :

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- BLUMENTHAL

"CERTAINLY WE ARE CONCERNED. WE HAVE SAID ALL ALONG THAT WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ANY DISORDERLY MOVEMENTS IN THE EXCHANGE MARKETS. THEY ARE NOT WARRANTED BY THE UNDERLYING CONDITIONS AND BY THE STRENGTH OF THE U.S. ECONOMY, AND THAT'S CLEARLY SOMETHING THAT WE'RE CONCERNED ABOUT."

NARR:

IN PEKING THIS WEEK MORE THAN 3 THOUSAND DEPUTIES WERE GATHERED AT THE NATIONAL PEOPLES' CONGRESS TO STUDY CHINA'S NEW TEN-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND TO PUT THEIR SEAL OF APPROVAL ON LEADERSHIP CHANGES SINCE THE DEATH OF MAO TSE-TUNG. CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG TOLD THE DEPUTIES THAT THE NEXT EIGHT YEARS ARE CRUCIAL TO THE CONTINUED MODERNIZATION OF FOUR AREAS: AGRICULTURE, DEFENSE, INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. LATER IN THE WEEK THE HEAVY STRESS ON CHINA'S ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT WAS ALSO EVIDENT IN THE DISCUSSIONS ON REVISING THE CHINESE CONSTITUTION. VOA'S JIM MILLER REPORTED FROM HONG KONG:

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- MILLER

"ALMOST FROM THE DAY THE GANG OF FOUR RADICALS AND THEIR DISRUPTIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL PROGRAMS WERE SWEPT FROM POWER IN 1976, CHINA RETURNED TO THE PRACTICAL MEANS CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO MODERNIZE THE NATION BY THE YEAR 2000. THIS GOAL HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED BY BOTH THE LATE PARTY CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG AND PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI. BEFORE THEY DIED IN 1976, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM HAD BEEN ENTRUSTED TO THE TALENTS OF THEIR MASTER ORGANIZER, VICE-PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING. BUT THE RADICALS SAW TO IT THAT THEIR BITTER EMEMY MISTER TENG WAS PURGED AND THAT THEIR OWN VERSION OF A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WAS SUBSTITUTED. CHINA OBSERVERS AGREE THAT THE INTERFERENCE OF THE GANG CAUSED A SETBACK IN ALMOST EVERY AREA OF CHINESE DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULARLY IN AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT, UNDER RADICAL DOCTRINE, WOULD NEVER PRODUCE CRITICALLY NEEDED SCIENTISTS AND TECHNICIANS. WITH THE RADICALS OUSTED, MISTER TENG WAS REHABILITATED AND PRAGMATISM RETURNED."

NARR:

BACK IN WASHINGTON, OPPONENTS OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES CONTINUED THEIR EFFORTS TO AMEND THE PACTS THIS WEEK, BUT WERE DEFEATED EIGHT TIMES. MAJORITY LEADER ROBERT BYRD MADE A ANOTHER STRONG PLEA FOR RATIFICATION, NOTING THAT THE CANAL IS OF MAJOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE NOT ONLY FOR THE UNITED STATES, BUT FOR THE OTHER NATIONS OF THE HEMISPHERE. AND, HE ADDED, THE KEY TO THAT SIGNIFICANCE LIES IN WHAT THE TREATIES PRIVDE: THE CONTINUED USE AND OPERATION OF THE CANAL IN THE NEXT CENTURY. MISTER BYRD ALSO STRESSED THAT THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN LATIN AMERICA STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE TREATIES:

TAPE: CUT SIX -- BYRD

"THE ASSOCIATION OF THE AMERICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE OF LATIN AMERICAN SUPPORTS THE TREATIES. THE EXECUTIVES OF MAJOR AMERICAN CORPORATIONS WITH BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN LATIN AMERICA, SUCH AS DOW CHEMICAL, I.B.M., DUPONT, AND THE UNITED BRANDS SUPPORT THE TREATIES. AND I BELIEVE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AS THEY BECOME CONVERSANT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE TREATIES, WILL RECOGNIZE -- AS DO THOSE BUSINESS ENTITIES -- THAT THE TREATIES MAKE ECONOMIC SENSE FOR THIS NATION -- AND FOR ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD WHICH WANT TO ASSURE AN OPEN AND SECURE WATERWAY THROUGH PANAMA."

NARR:

SUPPORTERS OF THE TREATIES CONCEDE THAT THEY ARE STILL SEVERAL VOTES SHORT OF THE TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY, OR 67 VOTES, NEEDED TO RATIFY THE AGREEMENTS.

ANNCR:

AND THOSE ARE SOME OF THE STORIES THAT MADE HEADLINES THIS WEEK. YOUR NARRATOR WAS-------. JOIN US AGAIN NEXT-----WHEN THE VOICE OF AMERICA TAKES A LOOK AT THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS OF THE WEEK.

JS/RCS